

Coalition Statement

Last October, the members of the Virginia Education Coalition issued a call to the Virginia Board of Education to address our concerns about the use of multiple criteria in the accountability measures used in the Standards of Accountability. Further, we made specific recommendations for the use of multiple criteria at the February 24th meeting of the Board.

As a result of certain actions by the Board and its president, Kirk Schroder, we now believe that the Virginia Board of Education is sufficiently addressing our concerns about the use of multiple criteria in the Standards of Learning program. We believe the Board is listening to the concerns of parents and educators in the difficult issues involved in implementing standards and accountability in public education. We encourage the Board to continue their inclusive approach toward building a meaningful, fair, and sustainable accountability system that works for all Virginia students.

Specifically, the Board has responded to our concerns in the following ways:

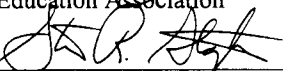
1. Board President Schroder's referral to the Virginia SOL Test Advisory Committee of the development of (a) a review process for students with inconsistent performance indicators, (b) a system for allowing students to retake any SOL test, if necessary, in a timely manner, (c) identification of other equivalent assessments to qualify for verified credits.
2. The Board's expansion of the role of the Virginia Test Advisory Committee to include matters involving the overall accountability of public education. We believe the Virginia SOL Test Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Mark Edwards and Board member Jennifer Byler, is composed of many qualified individuals representing a broad spectrum of stakeholders in Virginia public education.
3. The Board president's support in the adoption of legislation in the recent session of the General Assembly to review the SOLs on an established, ongoing time schedule as a matter of good practice, beginning this fall with the social studies standards.
4. The Board's adoption of the basic diploma option.
5. The Board's proposed revisions in the Standards of Accreditation which improve the overall accountability program by, among other things, allowing benchmarks for improvement and increasing student flexibility without compromising their accountability.
6. The Board president's support for factoring in a school's recovery rate as a result of remediation to affect a school's accreditation status.
7. The Board's adoption of the School Based Index which does not affect a school's accreditation but provides a context of how schools are meeting the standards in the face of challenging and difficult circumstances.


We believe these are major steps for the Board toward our common goal, and we look forward to being a part of an open dialogue with the Board as we journey down the road of SOL implementation.

Finally, we reiterate our support for high standards and meaningful accountability in public education. We believe the SOLs are moving in the right direction; however, there are more difficult issues ahead. It is important for the Board to maintain its current posture of open dialogue and listening to important concerns. We support the current leadership of the Board in carrying out the successful implementation of the SOL.

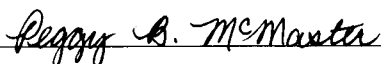
We will continue to hold the Board accountable for those important issues ahead. The time has come for all public educators and parents who are sincere about accountability to recognize the major improvements to the SOL program being made by the existing Board of Education. Educators must also do their part in making accountability work through a positive attitude and approach with the best interests of children in mind.



Va. Education Association

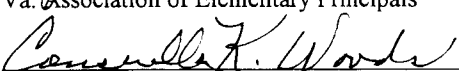

Va. Association of School Superintendents



Va. Congress of Parents and Teachers



Va. Counselors Association


Va. Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development


Va. Association of Elementary Principals


Va. Association of Secondary Principals


Va. School Counselors Association


Va. Retired Teachers Association